



[Home](#) > [Statistics](#) > [Labour](#) > [Employment and unemployment](#) > [Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia](#)
> September 2025

 This is not the latest release
[View the latest release](#)

Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia

People not working, or working less than they prefer, including whether they want to work, are looking for work, and factors for them to start working

Reference period September 2025

Released 4/02/2026

On this page

- [Key statistics](#)
- [People who did not have a job](#)
- [People who did not want to work](#)
- [People who were not available to work](#)
- [Incentives to work](#)
- [Data downloads](#)
- [Methodology](#)

Key statistics

In September quarter 2025:

- 1.2 million people (aged 18-75) without a (paid) job wanted a job, with 1.0 million available to start within 4 weeks.
- The most common reason men who wanted a job were unavailable to start within 4 weeks was 'Long-term health condition or disability'.
- The most common reason women who wanted a job were unavailable to start within 4 weeks was 'Caring for children'.
- 2.0 million people without a job did not want a job, with a further 1.9 million either retired or permanently unable to work.

Upcoming changes to release dates

The December quarter 2025 release originally scheduled for May 2026 will now be released on 31 March 2026. The March quarter 2026, which was originally scheduled for early August will now be released on 24 June 2026. The 2025-26 financial year will be released on 28 October 2026.

Upcoming changes to the Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation survey

As part of ABS plans to [modernise the Labour Force Survey \(https://www.abs.gov.au/about/key-priorities/data-acquisition-modernisation-program/modernising-labour-force-survey\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/about/key-priorities/data-acquisition-modernisation-program/modernising-labour-force-survey) (LFS), there will be changes to the way the labour supplementary surveys are conducted. These changes will also impact on the Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation survey, which is currently conducted as part of the Multi-Purpose Household Survey (MPHS). This will include changes to the timing of collection, the reference periods that data are published in respect of, the content collected, and the range and timing of outputs produced.

As described in the [August 2025 Characteristics of Employment release \(/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/characteristics-employment-australia/aug-2025\)](/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/characteristics-employment-australia/aug-2025), the key changes to the model used to collect the LFS and supplementary surveys include:

- no longer collecting the LFS supplementary surveys in specific calendar months each year - currently collected in February (Participation, Job Search and Mobility), May (Education and Work), and August (Characteristics of Employment)
- collecting a new redesigned labour supplementary survey on a monthly basis from respondents in their last (of eight) months in the LFS (the 'outgoing' rotation group)
- no longer collecting additional LFS content in 'quarter months' (Feb, May, Aug and Dec) - with content currently collected quarterly moving to either the 'core' monthly LFS (e.g. industry and occupation) or the new labour supplementary survey

Content currently collected in Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation will move to the new redesigned labour supplementary survey, and be integrated with similar content currently collected in Participation, Job Search and Mobility.

As a result, the 2025-26 Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation survey will be the last conducted in its current form.

The redesigned labour supplementary survey will combine and integrate content currently collected in:

- Characteristics of Employment
- Participation, Job Search and Mobility
- Barriers and Incentives (from MPHS)
- Casual Experience (from MPHS)
- current quarter month LFS content that isn't moving to the new core monthly LFS

Data from the new supplementary survey, including content previously collected in Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, will be compiled and published on a calendar year basis. More information on the content and timing of the suite of outputs that will be published from the new supplementary survey will be provided over the course of 2026, however we expect a similar range of data as published across the current suite of releases would continue to be available.

People who did not have a job

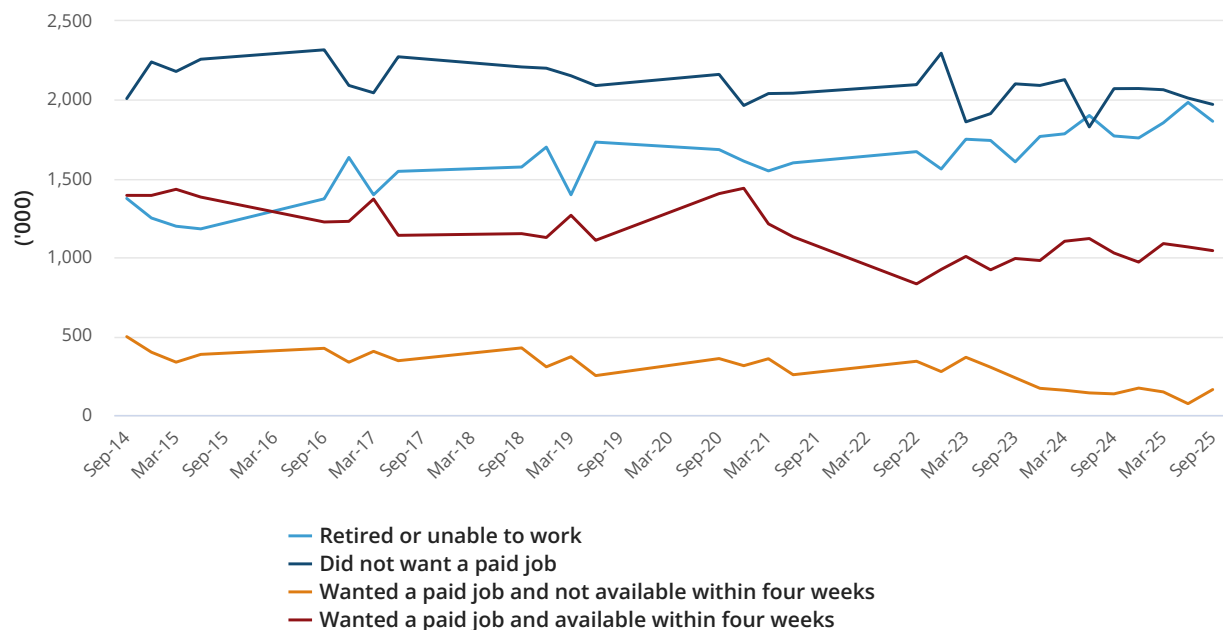
In September quarter 2025, there were 19 million people aged 18-75 years. Of these:

- 14 million were employed or had a job to start or return to (74%)
- 1.9 million were retired or permanently unable to work (10%)
- 3.2 million did not have a (paid) job (17%) - 1.2 million people wanted a (paid) job (38%) and 2.0 million people did

not want a (paid) job (62%).

Of the 1.2 million people who wanted a job, 1.0 million (87%) were available within 4 weeks and 161,300 (13%) were not available within 4 weeks.

People who did not have a job (aged 18-75)



Note: The survey was conducted every second year prior to 2022-23.

In September quarter 2025, of those aged 18-75 years who did not have a job, were not retired and not permanently unable to work:

- 2.0 million had a long-term health condition, and of these, 757,600 (39%) wanted a paid job.
- 1.3 million had a disability, with 564,000 of these people wanting a paid job (44%).

Note that people can report having both a long-term health condition and a disability.

People who did not want to work

Of the 2.0 million people aged 18-75 years who did not want a job in September 2025, the main reason for not wanting a job was 'No need, satisfied with current arrangements' (40%). For both men and women aged 18-24 years, 'Studying or returning to studies' was the main reason for not wanting a job (73% for men and 60% for women).

For women aged 25-39 years, 'Caring for children' (57%) was the main reason for not wanting a job, up from 47% in June 2025 and for men was 'Studying or returning to studies' (49%).

For men aged 40-54 years, 'Long-term health condition or disability' was the main reason for not wanting a job (55%) and for women was 'Caring for children' (24%).

People who were not available to work

The main reasons women who wanted a job were not available within 4 weeks were:

- Caring for children (36%)
- Long-term health condition or disability (18%).

The main reasons men who wanted a job were not available within 4 weeks were:

- Long-term health condition or disability (12%).
- Caring for children (7%).

Incentives to work

Of the 3.2 million people who did not have a job in September quarter 2025, the most important factor associated with either returning to or commencing work was 'Finding a job that matches skills and experience', which was rated as 'Very important' by 33% of people.

For people with a long-term health condition, the most important factors were 'Finding a job that matches skills and experience' (34%) and 'Working a set number of hours on set days' (29%). For people with a disability, it was 'Finding a job that matches skills and experience' (37%).

Data downloads

Quarterly time series

[Download all \(42.44 MB\)](#)

Table Q1. Participation status

[Download XLSX](#)
[2.15 MB]

Table Q2. Whether wanted a job or more hours

[Download XLSX](#)
[842.62 KB]

Table Q3. Unavailable workers and job seekers

[Download XLSX](#)
[3.18 MB]

Table Q4. Reasons not looking for work or more hours

[Download XLSX](#)
[7.82 MB]

Table Q5. Difficulties finding work or more hours

[Download XLSX](#)
[5.36 MB]

Table Q6. Reasons for not wanting to work or more hours

[Download XLSX](#)
[21.12 MB]

Table Q7. Incentives to work

[Download XLSX](#)
[4 MB]

Methodology

[Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia methodology, September 2025](#)